

Tips For Healthy Holiday Eating

As the holidays draw near, please know that eating healthier and being happier this time of year is doable. Remember a little planning goes a long way and so does reminding yourself that it's ok to have a baby splurge and avoid those negative voices that maybe in your head.

Here are a few of my holiday eating strategies that help get into the holiday spirit without completely ditching my healthy eating efforts.

1. Do not starve yourself. Delicious food is such a focus over the holidays that it becomes a big concern for those concerned about their weight. You may be tempted to only eat very little or try not to eat anything at all; but skipping meals or starving yourself leads to problems such as blood sugar crashes, poor food choices and weight gain if your body kicks into starvation mode. Eating a healthy and filling snack before you go to parties is always a classic tip. It's also a great idea to plan before you head out to other holiday activities, like shopping trips, a drink with friends or volunteering. Otherwise when hunger hits, there always seems to be a full of sugar treat that you won't be able to pass up. Keep a healthy snack on you.

2. Practice mindful of eating: When food is everywhere, it's easy to lose track of what you're eating. Slow down, be mindful, chew, savor the taste, texture and smell of the food. Fill your plate mainly with healthier options and just get a taste of the unhealthy or less healthy options. If you are eating things you are not use to, or things that make you gassy, take an enzyme before you eat.

3. Eat foods that fill you up, not make you hungrier. Eating protein, carbs with fiber and healthy fats at every snack and meal, helps to slow down digestion and keep blood sugar levels more stable. You'll feel fuller longer and better resist cravings. Avoid high sugar foods because they are going to make you hungrier – and even crave more sugar. As you plan what to eat, remember that sugar isn't just sweets, but also alcohol and simple carbohydrates.

4. Create new holiday traditions and recipes. We can get so caught up in the way we "always" do things that we forget there is still room for change in many of our favorite foods. I still make great food; I just modify it. Think about ways you can modify and update some of your favorite recipes. Examples are to bake something instead of fry, use Greek yogurt instead of sour cream, swap can coconut milk for heavy cream, bone broth to make sauces and gravy, and almond flour for regular flour just add an extra egg or 2 to hold it together and arrowroot to help it rise. If you really like how they turn out, you'll have a great new recipe to share at the party. You can make modifications in most any recipe and it still taste great.

5. Plan ahead for home too: With all the festivities, it can be easy to forget about the meals you are eating at home. Preparing healthy meals and snacks ahead of time keeps convenience from taking priority when you're rushing around.

6. Do not feel obligated to take leftovers home from a party. If you do feel more comfortable taking a plate home with you, you can give a plate to a homeless person, share gifts of food or donate it.

Here's to a happy and healthy holiday season!

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